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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Poland

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SUBJECT Production and Supply of
Anti-Biotics and Other Drugs

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REFERENCES

1. Penicillin is the only anti-biotic manufactured on a commercial scale in Poland. The penicillin is in the form of amber-colored powder. This type of penicillin is not suitable for ophthalmic or laryngological application. Moreover it frequently causes allergy manifested by rashes or spotty eruptions which are very slow in retreating after the application of desensitizing treatment. The fact that penicillin packings are collected suggests that they are used by the manufacturers again and again. Apart from penicillin manufactured in Poland there is on the market imported penicillin of Hungarian origin as well as the Danish "Leopenicillin". The latter is issued in exceptional cases only and only on specialists' prescriptions. It is frequently unobtainable altogether so that for all practical purposes it is not available for general treatment. Imported penicillin is stored in large quantities, probably for the event of war. At regular intervals, when its effectiveness wears off, large quantities of it are thrown on the market, and all restrictions are lifted. The effectiveness of the drug is "lengthened" by affixing little chips guaranteeing a new date of validity.
2. Streptomycin, exclusively imported, is distributed by the Central Anti-Tubercular Office (PCP-g) through its voivodship branches. The TB specialist who is treating a TB patient must apply to the Voivodship For PG (TB Advisory Center), stating the reason for applying streptomycin. Commissions meet once a month and discuss the applications according to their dates.
3. Chloromycin is a drug allocated exclusively to fever hospitals. The allocations are irregular, quantities are small and insufficient to carry on with a treatment. Usually the fever hospital starts a treatment and the patient's family tries to secure through private channels the continuation of the supply of the drug.
4. Large quantities of foreign drugs are imported from Czechoslovakia, i.e., diodothyrosine and bellaspon (which corresponds to Bellergal). The central pharmacies (apteki-bazy) sell foreign drugs manufactured in western countries.

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Drugs to be found in them come from remainders (ex-German stocks and ex-American stocks from UNRRA) and from purchase from private individuals (seamen, people receiving parcels from abroad, etc.) Finding a drug one is looking for in one of the pharmacies is a matter of pure luck and accident.

5. In addition to nationalized pharmacies there are UB (Security Police) pharmacies which are used exclusively for UB personnel. Compared with nationalized pharmacies these are very well stocked and carry a large variety of foreign drugs and medicines.
6. Apart from the shortage of drugs and their poor quality the public is suffering from very faulty and chaotic distribution. Thus, for example, one pharmacy will accidentally receive a large allocation of drug "x" while others are deprived of it completely. Supplies of medicine, technical and medical equipment are very uneven throughout Poland. The coastal areas are privileged in this respect. The poor quality of the drugs is best testified to by fairly outspoken circulars circulated to the Health Service Centers. These circulars announce the impending arrival of some drug (i.e., glucose, gluconatum, strophantin, etc.) or some technical material (e.g., cat-gut) and instruct the center in question to withdraw it from circulation. This always happens after some patient treated with these things has either died or fallen dangerously ill.
7. A doctor with a private practice has at his disposal all the non-rationed medicines obtainable in nationalized pharmacies on a par with the doctors of nationalized medical service. Private patients, however, must pay the full price of the medicines.

8. [redacted] the Wander production plant in Krakow in 1949 [redacted] employed approximately 250 people. The plant was just being adapted from the production of nutrients to that of drugs. [redacted] the pharmaceutical department was manufacturing calcium gluconatum. The ampule shop employed about 150 women, working by hand. The completed ampules were checked under a screen for the presence of mechanical impurities and sediments. The technical equipment of the place put one in mind of a small plant with restricted production possibilities (with a maximum output of several thousand ampules per day). Under the conditions prevailing in that plant at the time no scientific research work could possibly have been carried on there. The personnel consisted of five to eight scientists, approximately 150 persons employed in the ampule shop, and about 30 auxiliary personnel (laboratory hands, people serving food mills, administration, etc).

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